

Coleridge and his confidants

By John Beer

KATHLEEN COBURN:
In Pursuit of Coleridge
202pp. Bodley Head. £4.50.

In the "Poem to Coleridge" which later came to be called *The Prelude*, Wordsworth at one point implied regret that Coleridge had not had the benefit of his own early upbringing, in wild country and among "a race of real children". Coleridge himself wrote, in "Frost at Midnight", of the deprivation he had suffered by being confined to a city school and hoped that his son Hartley might grow up close to nature, with full access to the steady and enriching influence of mountains and lakes.

Kathleen Coburn, who has given much of her life to investigation and presentation of Coleridge's work, has had some of the advantages that Coleridge lacked. Brought up in a large family, one of six children of a Methodist minister in a Canadian city, she spent her summers in a cottage on the shores of Lake Joseph. Later she managed to buy, for less than two hundred dollars, an island in Georgian Bay which became a regular retreat for work and rest.

This gave a permanent counterpoise to her life, an ability to move between the timeless beauty and wild freedom of a Canadian lake and the consuming concentration demanded by work in the British Museum. Unlike Coleridge, who was always better at keeping the world in his head than at keeping it behind him, she could live a life fully balanced between the mental and the physical.

But how did she come to her all-embracing subject in the first place? Mainly, it seems, through her cross-disciplinary education at Victoria College in Toronto, which led her to an interest in Coleridge's philosophical thinking. This took her to Oxford (and a chance introduction to Lord and Lady Coleridge which was later to prove important) and to the British Museum, where she worked on Coleridge's marginal notes in some of the philosophical books he had used. The research was successful, but there remained the riddle of a manuscript containing a transcript of Coleridge's lectures on the subject, which his descendants disclaimed all knowledge and thought it must have disappeared in the tragic "tin trunk" which was lost in transit between London and Turin in 1895. Some years later, going through some many rooms in the house of Gerard Coleridge, she had the excitement of plunging far into a deep chimney-like cupboard and retrieving it intact. The result was her edition of the *Philosophical Lectures*.

Yet that trophy, though important, was not the prize. It belonged to a later period of his life when his powers had begun to flag. The real treasure, which she had glimpsed some years before in Lord Coleridge's house at Ottery, was the collection of notebooks which Coleridge kept throughout his life, many dating from the time of mental ferment when he was developing his own psychological theories and stimulating Wordsworth to autobiographical investigation of his own. In them, Coleridge had jotted down his day-by-day reactions to people, events and, above all, his reading. The entries ranged from ideas and drafts for poems to private confessions of hopeless love. In speculative range they were unique.

There had been some awareness of their existence in the world of scholarship, but for long time inquiries about them proved fruitless, since Coleridge's descendants, on being asked about them, would insist that they were not available. The reason, not easily ascertainable, was that the poet's grandson, George Hardy Coleridge, had been forced to sell his most precious manuscripts to a wealthy relative on the other side of the family, Bernard Coleridge, in order to pay for his son's education at Cambridge. For some years they had been languishing in the Chantor's House at Ottery St Mary, where the library doubled as the drawing-room, so that no one could work at them without risk of disturbing the life

of the family. From such dangers they were guarded by the current Lord Coleridge.

It was an ironic fate. These pale repositories of Coleridge's solitary thoughts and longings, sometimes directly addressed by him as his "Sole confidants", had passed into the keeping of a bluff, beef-eating Coleridge, who displayed deep contempt for one who had always been regarded on that side of the family as little more than a drug-addict and wastrel. To the collector who approached him with inquiries about the notebooks he was patronizing in his rebuffs, replying with equal and impartial hostility to Ernest de Selincourt's request to see some of Wordsworth's letters, or to the Oxford research student trying to complete his B.Litt thesis. Although the fears for his privacy are understandable, the rudenesses mentioned by Professor Coburn must have been galling to those on the receiving end. Only she managed to get any kind of entry—and one wonders how she herself put up with it at times. Some things she records, such as his habit of calling her "Bookie", still make one shift with embarrassment.

However, she assures us that a good deal was going on beneath the unpromising exterior and that she earned his respect by fighting back vigorously, and often successfully, at his attempts to put her down as a North American ignoramus.

There was also a quiet power for amelioration in the house, his wife Jessie to whom he was devoted. A Jesuit in her own way, she poured oil on troubled waters; she may indeed have helped with the shrewd and generous proposal which Kathleen Coburn later put forward to save him from the hazard of scholarly enquiries, and that she was indeed a woman of great strength. The case was made to the British Museum, at considerable cost in time and money to herself and her college in Toronto the project was carried through and the problem largely solved.

After a time there was an even more welcome development. Lord Coleridge indicated that he would be willing to part with the manuscripts themselves, if a suitable deal could be negotiated. The commission which was formed, and which included several eminent literary men, was dominated by Humphry House, who became, she says, a tower of strength. The case was made to the British Museum, at considerable cost in time and money to herself and her college in Toronto the project was carried through and the problem largely solved.

There was one small contretemps, however. Humphry House had been deputed to prepare the committee's report. Lunching with Professor Coburn, he suggested that she should notice a party to it, implying that the glowing account of her editorial capabilities would look incongruous over a group of signatures which included her own. She agreed, though reluctantly—feeling, among other things, that the suggestion would not have been made to a man. Her uneasiness was the event justified, since it turned out to be part of the transaction that the photographs which she had arranged to be deposited in the British Museum were now to be turned over to Jesus College, Cambridge, for keeping them in London, in view of the fragile state of the originals, and she should, in any case, have been consulted, but by the time she learned of the plan it was too late to object. The affair left a bitter aftertaste.

Some years later the opportunity came to act more independently. A. H. B. Coleridge, in ill-health and wishing to move to the country, decided that he would like to sell some of the collection that had now passed to him from Gerard. Kathleen Coburn obtained his permission to make inquiries at the British Museum, where she was told that

the museum had no money for such a purpose and that the officials there would not sanction a further appeal for funds. The Keeper of the Manuscripts implied that he could think of better uses for Pilgrim Trust money.

A. H. B. Coleridge, gloomy at the news, decided that he would like to sell almost everything and named the price for which he would do so. Greatly excited, Professor Coburn managed to raise the amount before she left England so that the collection could be acquired for Toronto. There followed a scurry to get an export licence. Things were on her side, however, since the authorizing body turned out to be that same Department of Manuscripts which had just refused to sanction an appeal. Their authority duly given, there was just time to race back to the Board of Trade for the licence. The next evening she sailed from Southampton and was able from mid-Atlantic to write a quietly triumphant letter to Humphry House, telling him of the development.

Humphry House was not unpardonably less than enchanted at the news. He wrote an angry letter, saying with what I felt was childish petulance that he had met Lord Coleridge and had seen the notebooks before, and that he had helped with the procuring of the Ottery collection because he believed in his policy of consolidating Coleridge material. He implied some diminution in case in his possession of a fine poetic sensibility. Her own feelings, however, were taken from further into his achievement: Livingston Lowes, who had demonstrated some of the processes of his imagination, and J. A. Richards, who saw him as, at his best, the great exemplar of a free and creative human intelligence. In the end it was Richards's Coleridge who seized her most. Talking with George Whalley just after the Second World War she discovered, she says, that they had in common "an interest in Coleridge's mind—as distinct from his magic—and in what he did analytically and creatively with his reading." One could legitimately demur at the distinction and argue that one cannot ultimately understand his intellectual enterprises unless one sees how closely they involved his "magic"—which in turn was bound up with his attempts to discover the points of correspondence between the human mind and nature on the one hand and nature on the other. Yet her declared interest was timely, and precisely the light one for the notebooks. To have pursued Coleridge to the full range of his mind might have left little time for all the detailed cross-connecting work that must be done if they were to be properly edited. On the way she could also concentrate on the doctrine that those who like Coleridge must dislike Wordsworth, and vice versa.

She retraced Coleridge's steps in Malta and Italy, using her halting Italian (honestly reproduced) to make contact with local inhabitants, taste a wine that Coleridge praised, and find a context for his notebook entries of the time. She gives a vivid picture of what it was like to be a Canadian scholar during and after the Second World War, watching the danger to her European friends, helping with local relief schemes and then re-emerging into a London that was battered but still recognizably itself.

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There is room for argument here, obviously, but House's view is actually supported elsewhere in Pro-

cessor Coburn's book, where she says that a few years before the then Director, Sir John Forsdyke, discussing the offer of the Ottery notebooks, advised her to procure them for Canada, but said that if the Trust offered them they would be forced to accept them.

Professor Coburn goes on to say that in February 1955 Humphry House "wrote another angry letter", this time not to her but to *The Times*, asking by whose authority the manuscripts had left the country. (Here she is misremembering. That letter was written in January, and not by House but by John Hayward. Humphry House's contribution, four weeks later, was an even-tempered and thoughtful examination of the current arrangements and ways in which they might be improved.) The correspondence enabled her to put her own case vigorously, arguing that there were good reasons for having the materials in Canada, where scholars did not often have the chance to see and handle original manuscripts. She also made it clear that there would never be any restriction on their availability. Anyone who has visited Toronto for the purpose knows that that promise has been honoured magnificently. In addition, the collection was microfilmed before it left England and has remained permanently accessible here in that form.

Finally, as Professor Coburn points out, the affair helped set in motion a tightening-up of the procedures whereby such works were allowed to leave the country. I believe that House's dream of preserving as many of the manuscripts as possible together was both noble and sensible and that his emotion on hearing of his being deprived of them was prompted not by "childish petulance" but by the force of a case which is not fully answered here.

Such a failure to penetrate the full quality of the person being described is an exception in a book which is unusually rich in sympathy and insight. Perhaps there is something about Coleridge that has helped. One could hardly work for so long with the private utterances of such a man, his strengths sometimes choked by pathetic weaknesses, without being led to glimpse something of the hidden burdens that may be carried by other individuals, who may present a much less impressive exterior to the world than he did. If so, living with Coleridge has been humanizing here as well.

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Comparative Religion

It's so much easier now.

Once, it was blood

The stricken

Yell of the victim

And the horrible, holy, sticky hands of the priest.

But now, just press the button.

The god comes down at once

Clean, prompt and deferential

As electricity

Not even inquiring

What it is we want to destroy.

Elma Mitchell

Slaves of the gene

By Vernon Reynolds

MARSHALL SABLINS:
The Use and Abuse of Biology
An Anthropological Critique of
Sociobiology
120pp. Tavistock. Paperback, £1.95.

Anyone who picks up a hand-axe and throws it back, especially a new and powerful one, is a fool or a hero, but certainly not a coward. Opinion among anthropologists is presently divided between those who think Marshall Sablins's reaction to sociobiology was precipitate, and those who believe it to have been not only right but timely. Should he be mentioned in dispatches or forgotten as one who let his side down by jumping up when guerrilla tactics might have won the day?

Professor Sablins saw distortions in sociobiological dogma very quickly, and has acted to point them out. He also saw the ideological matrix of sociobiology, but a lot of people saw that, and a protracted and unavailing debate between E. O. Wilson, Lewontin and others followed. Sablins does rather better than this: he has focused on what he takes to be academic errors, and written a searching critique of the sociobiological interpretation of human social organization as applied to kinship systems. He disputes all claims that the social organizations of humans, like those of animals, arise out of the transmission of genetic characters by the processes of natural selection.

The arguments for and against this view demand acquaintance with certain theories both in social anthropology and sociobiology. In the former field it is important to realize that social anthropologists such as Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Lévi-Strauss and many others have already generalized broadly from the detailed structure of social ideas and actions encountered in primitive societies, but their generalizations had concerned the integration of individuals into wider formations, not the transmission of genes. They had all, despite major differences, been concerned with human action as the product of social forces, institutional, logical or other. They were all concerned with group processes. None of them indeed, perhaps, saw the social anthropology, would in the past or the present want to put the welfare, health, and survival of the individual before that of the group.

It is precisely this which sociobiologists do. And not just the individual, but his genes. So if a society in the Himalayan foothills practises polyandry, it's no good anthropologists thinking they've explained it when they point out that it has a

certain functional value for groups to organize things this way when economic resources are tight. Nor is it any better to establish that polyandry "makes sense" in terms of the way such groups themselves conceive of their social institutions. The ultimate explanation, in sociobiological terms, is to be found in the processes of genetic transmission, and study will show that in given ecological situations genes promoting behaviour patterns that lead to the formation of polyandrous unions will be selected for, while others will be selected against. Thus these men will reproduce better and faster whose genes tell them "share a wife with your brothers" than men whose genes tell them "get a wife of your own" or "get as many wives as you can".

There are two easy answers to Wilson's geneticism, and Sablins deals with both. The first is to say "people don't do what their genes tell them: polyandry isn't a genetic process, it's a form of received knowledge or accepted custom in a group". To this the sociobiologist replies "that's how it seems, but the reality is otherwise". The second easy answer is to say "husbands, wives and marriage are one thing, but what makes them so is another, and that's genes". To this the sociobiologist replies that there is usually some concordance between the two systems but in any case it is the latter, the mating system, that really matters.

On this question of concordance Sablins makes a number of relevant points. For instance, among the Amerindians, as far as we know, men socially can marry other women and have children by them, though these are, of course, fathered biologically by men. Clearly, marriage rules are not going to tell us much about gene flow in such cases. But there are other issues that go much deeper. In the Trobriands a person is brought up by his mother and her brother, and is thought to be related to his maternal uncle only. Thus the mother's husband plays no part in the rearing of the children in whom half his genes are represented, preferring to invest his efforts in his sister's child in whom only one quarter of his genes are represented. This seems to be the reverse of the sociobiologist's expectations, unless other aspects of the kinship system serve to redress the balance. For instance, if man A's sister's son is subsequently married, preferentially, his (A's) own daughter (with whom A has a one-half genetic involvement) then A's genes may well be getting on better than they are. Sablins's emphasis on the actual ethnographic evidence is academically sound. In the field of human kinship theory, the sociobiologists, despite their mathematically precise arguments, have come awfully close to making us ask the question: how have they already asked in these pages

The scars of culture

By Peter Clark

YUSUF FAHIL HASAN:
Shulukk
90pp. Khartoum University Press.

Most Northern Sudanese of the Nile Valley of a certain age have scar-marks on their cheeks. These marks are an intimate, unalterable part of the traditional culture. Foreigners are often inhibited from prying into something that seems very personal but they may notice that it is as rare in the North for a young Sudanese of twenty to have these cuts as it is for a Sudanese of fifty to be without them. In one generation the custom seems to be dying out.

It was in danger of disappearing without trace until Yusuf Fahil Hasan decided to bring together notes and observations he had made on the phenomenon. Professor Hasan is the Director of the Insti-

tute of African and Asian Studies at the University of Khartoum. The Institute has been collecting oral and linguistic material and coordinating various studies—history, anthropology, archaeology, language studies, folklore and others. The material has been collected in the Sudan of the Nile Valley are a young Sudanese of twenty to have these cuts as it is for a Sudanese of fifty to be without them. In one generation the custom seems to be dying out.

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There is more evidence for the practice of cuts in the last two cen-

tures. Professor Hasan argues that different tribes had distinguishing marks, borrowed often from camel brandings. The decline and dissolution of the Funj Sultanate of Sennar in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century led to a regrouping of allegiances. New loyalties were to religious brotherhoods (*tarīqas*) rather than to tribes. Collective identification was demonstrated by cutting *shulukk*. An "I" made a cross and could be an unconscious survival from Christian Nubia.

In *Shulukk* Professor Hasan has recorded the available evidence on the facial markings from poetry, written sources in Arabic and other languages and his own personal observation. The cuts (*shulukk*) in the Sudan of the Nile Valley are a young Sudanese of twenty to have these cuts as it is for a Sudanese of fifty to be without them. In one generation the custom seems to be dying out.

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Where the vertical meets the horizontal

By Terence Hawkes

DAVID LODGE:

The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy and the Typology of Modern Literature. 296pp. Edward Arnold. £8.95 (paperback, £3.95).

Among the historic touchstones of our culture, the number of the moment in 1941 when Roman Jakobson first set foot on American soil. It can serve as an emblem for the fusion of two hitherto independently flourishing growths: on the one hand Russian Formalism and Jakobson's standing as a Prague School linguist had been preceded by his involvement with the DPOYAZ theorists of Petrograd and Moscow) and on the other the formalism of Anglo-American criticism. (The Richards had settled in America just two years before Jakobson's arrival, and was already established at Harvard by the time Jakobson reached there in 1949).

Probably no record exists of the first meeting of Jakobson and Richards. But in any case, David Lodge's book can stand as its inter-day memorial, in as far as it offers a sustained attempt at a synthesis of the two traditions of modern formalist criticism. In effect, this involves the finding of one of Jakobson's central formalist/functionalist notions on to an Anglo-American base.

The chief impulse towards such a synthesis comes from Lodge's recognition that the answers to questions as fundamental as "what is literature?" "what is the relation between form and content?" and "what is realism?" can be supplied only by means of a "comprehensive typology of literary discourse": one capable of describing and discriminating between all types of text (literary or otherwise) without prejudgement. Such a typology must enable us first to distinguish literature from non-literature, and then to distinguish one kind of literature from another.

Part One of the book proposes fictionality as the distinctive element common to all kinds of literature, manifesting itself in a fundamentally deviant structuring of the component parts of the text. The "patterns" which result function as conventions in our culture and force us to respond to texts which exhibit them as "literary". Even when (as in the case of "realism") a text overtly aims at presenting itself as "non-literary", it does so by means of conventional structural devices (nicely observed here in an excellent account of the public execution scene in Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives Tale*) which, although approximating closely to "descriptions of similar experience in non-literary texts of the same culture", are nevertheless crucially distinguishable from them.

If fictionality and its attendant conventions distinguish literature from non-literature, then its modes of operation enable us to distinguish one kind of literature from another. Given this, modern fiction seems to fall into two broad categories: realism, which emphasizes content (exemplified by the work of Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy and others) and modernism, which emphasizes form (exemplified by the work of James, Conrad, Joyce and others). What is needed, therefore, is a poetics or aesthetics of fiction, which can embrace descriptively all the varieties of this kind of writing. Structuralism, at least of the variety that surfaces as *nouvelle critique*, is unfitted for this role, says Lodge, despite Barthes's fruitful distinction between "writerly" and "readerly" modes. Because of its surrounding "polemic" against realism, Anglo-American criticism exhibits a similar prejudice. We need a synthesizing approach, as capable in respect of realism as of modernism, and for this it is to Jakobson, or to Lodge's speculative expansion of his theory, that the argument of Part Two of the book turns.

Writing in 1956 about the linguistic problems of the disorder called aphasia (loss or impairment of the power to understand and/or to use speech), Jakobson had proposed an account of the disorder in terms of the breakdown of the linguistic system of "similarity" (similarity of meaning) and "contiguity" (contiguity of sound), which he related to

the two rhetorical figures, metaphor and metonymy.

In Jakobson's view, the distinction between these figures is fundamental. Metaphor proposes a "transference of similarity" or analogy between one entity and another which may be substituted for it. In the case of metonymy, the basis for the substitution is not similarity so much as sequence. The entity involved in the substitution is chosen because it is "adjacent" to or "contiguous" with the one it replaces: it "follows on" in sequence from it.

As a result of his observations of aphasic patients, Jakobson felt able to propose that human language in fact operates in terms of two fundamental dimensions whose characteristics crystallize in these rhetorical devices. In effect, Jakobson sees metaphor and metonymy as the defining modes of a dual process of selection and combination by which means all linguistic signs are formed: "the given utterance (message) is constituted of constituent parts (sentences, words, phonemes, etc) selected from the repository of all possible constituent parts (the code)". Thus messages are constructed by the interaction of a horizontal movement, which combines parts together, and a vertical movement, which selects the particular words from the available inventory of the language. The "horizontal" combinatory (or syntagmatic) process manifests itself in contiguity (one word being placed next to another); its principle is "contextual", its mode is metonymic. The "vertical", selective (or associative) process manifests itself in similarity (one word or concept being "like" another); its principle is that of "substitution" and its mode is metaphoric. Both metaphor and metonymy can be sub-divided into other figures (simile is a type of metaphor, synecdoche a type of metonymy) but the distinction between them remains fundamental, because it reflects the fundamental dimensions of language itself.

Lodge's "speculative expansion" of this theory involves considerable refinements, mostly of terminology. In place of Jakobson's "contexture", the process by which, on the metonymic axis, any linguistic unit serves as a context for simpler units, and at the same time locates its own context in more complex units, he offers "deletion", the process whereby contexture is condensed through the nonlogical omission of one or more items from a natural combination. Thus the "keel conventionally, but without logical justification, acts as a metonym for ship; 'deep' for sea, and so on.

It is of course true that Jakobson's most celebrated account of "literariness" in fact resolves itself into a concern with the "poetic" function of language. The functionalism of his Prague School background is much in evidence in the argument that when language is used poetically, it draws on both the selective and the combinative modes in order to promote equivalence: "The poetic function [of language] projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination". Lodge argues that since the poetic function is dominated by "substitution-making" or "substitutional operations of metaphor, then the whole theory of what constitutes literature is heavily biased towards verse rather than prose literature". If we are concerned with what Jakobson calls "realistic literature", immediately tied with the metonymic principle, then the "poetic" function, which ought to be an account of language's prosodic, equivalence-making, and its "contextual" or "deleting" mode. Logically, Lodge argues, this ought to be the projection of the principle of contiguity from the axis of selection into the axis of selection.

However, there are two objections to this. First, as Lodge himself admits, interpreted in this weak sense (to mean that contiguity or context controls selection of words) the distinction is non-specific; this is the way ordinary naturalistic prose works. Interpreted in the strong sense, it would apply as well to verbal forms characteristic of aphasia as to literary prose. Second, Jakobson's presupposes that the equivalence between the two modes is not arbitrary, and that therefore, metaphoric and metonymic structures do not engage in it, but in something else (called

"contiguity" or "contexture", or "similarity", but in effect, these are all devices of equivalence. In short, the opposition of "equivalence" and "contiguity" is not a true one. The logic of Jakobson's thesis would equally well enable us to formulate the "prosodic" function of language as "equivalence from the axis of combination into the axis of selection".

Lodge's solution proposes the assimilation of the metonymic/prosodic to the metaphoric/poetic axis in respect of literature through a recognition that "at the highest level of generality at which we can apply the metaphor/metonymy distinction, literature itself is metaphoric and non-literature metonymic". The literary text, in short, is always metaphoric, even when it writes in the metonymic mode. Thus within literature, the metaphoric and the metonymic dimensions function, not as two mutually exclusive poles, but as modes which

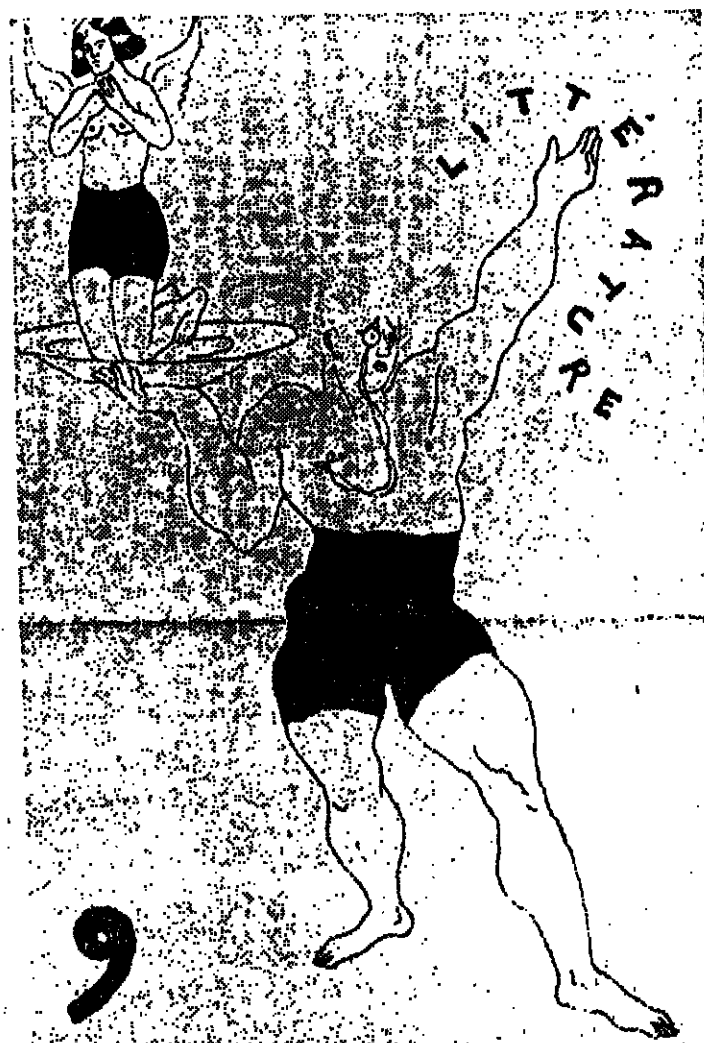
compose for dominance within an ultimately metaphoric context.

The purchase on modern fiction of the poetry of Auden (the influence of the largely metonymic medium, the film, is clearly discernible, in the 1940s the pendulum swings back again from metonymy to metaphor (Dylan Thomas) and in the 1950s from metaphor to metonymy (Philip Larkin). The "history of modern English literature", claims Lodge, "can be seen as an oscillation in the practice of writing between polarized clusters of attitudes and techniques: modernist, symbolist or mythopoetic, writerly and metaphoric on the one hand; antimodernist, realistic, readerly and metonymic on the other".

There will, of course, be no shortage of commentators to disagree with this striking and productive conclusion. My own reservations have less to do with the details of the theory and the arguments dependent upon it than with a particular presupposition upon which these seem to rest: that literature is and ought to be a "privileged" form of communication between human beings.

Structuralism's "disadvantage" is said at an early stage in the argument to reside in the fact that it "applies through the whole of culture" and thus "leaves open the question of why we should be interested in literature at all". Indeed, it does, but I would not call that a disadvantage, and the question must remain open. It is not necessarily met by the drawing of distinctions between different uses to which the written word can be put. As Barthes points out, "writing" can have a larger sense beyond that of the written word. It can be thought of as the mode of the entire intention of human culture into nature. To plough a field, in this sense, is to "write" upon it: all ways of life represent human "inscriptions" upon the world. The open question which then rephrases: what unknown, unacknowledged theory of semiotics silently implicates us in the extent that we may, for the moment, award a specific kind of writing, within an extremely limited sphere, a very special degree of privilege?

Perhaps Lodge's commitment to a (largely metonymic) novelist has already proved a decisive factor in his response to this issue, and that cannot be a matter for regret here. Certainly, it lends his book an attractive urgency and bite. The result is a bold, incisive essay which, with admirable lucidity, offers its readers a brilliant honed and deftly applied analysis. It should be widely read. If, in the process, it serves to persuade the Anglo-American literary community not only that some theory of literature is both necessary and desirable, but that we are in a case in the unavailing grip of others which determine our presuppositions at the deepest level, it can serve as a more than adequate memorial of Jakobson's arrival amongst us. And what, in itself, seemed a small step for a book might, even as a result, be a leap for a leap of sorts for literary criticism.



A cover for *Littérature*, new series, designed by Francis Picabia, and one of several reproduced in *The Real World of the Surrealists* by Malcolm Haslam (264pp with 33pp of colour and 200 black-and-white illustrations. Weydenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50). The book, which is to be published next week, will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

Taking the consequences

By Mary Kay Wilmers

ALAN and MARY McQUEEN SIMPSON: *I Too am Here: Selections from the Letters of Jane Walsh Carlyle*. 300pp. Cambridge University Press. £5.50.

When one has married a man of genius one must take the consequences. Jane Carlyle "once wrote" and until Carlyle became interested in Lady Ashburton she took them rather well. From her letters one sometimes has the impression that the shortcomings of her housemates chafed her as much as the difficulties of her life. I think, talk and write about my servants as much as Geraldine [Walsh] does about her lovers. She is supposed to have said, before they got married, Carlyle warned me that I should have to live in the house. This is a very old story. Nature herself, which no mortal de-

parts from unpunished": and after her death wrote to the second Lady Ashburton: "her life from the time we met was and continued all mine". She in turn showed a kind of genius in accommodating her eccentricities and in describing, in letters to her family and friends, the domestic peculiarities of their life together. There is some irony in the fact that now more attention tends to be paid to her than to "the head of the Mystic School" himself.

Jane Carlyle is interesting for the good reason that her letters are full of concrete observation, of irony, sense and wit, not least in the account she gave in her later years of the difficulties that ill-health and Carlyle's fondness for his company of Lady Ashburton caused her; but she is also a focus of attention for the mere fact of being a woman. "As the woman of the story", Alan and Mary McQueen Simpson say in the preface to this selection of extracts from her letters, "Jane had the stronger claim." Was she a victim of Carlyle's selfishness (as Proust maintained) or a neurotic in her own right (the post-Freudian view)? We decided, the Simpsons say,

"to make... our own assessment of the marriage" and they sometimes talk about their subject like marriage guidance counsellors. In conference. "A modern reader" they say, "unwary of her personal life, might feel that the account of the relationship, but wrong in its extract itself from it; that she was one more phase in her when she should have asserted her independence. Carlyle of that? Have liked it, but was of that? Sadly, perhaps unavailing, they fail to do their client justice. The extracts from her letters are arranged according to subject-matter — "courtship", "marriage", "the children", "the household", and so on — and though one must be full to them for telescoping 500 letters into one volume, one must also be full to them for the way the passages were set, of Jane Carlyle's alertness, for instance, to her respondents' lives: the effect is to make her seem more narrowly self-absorbed than she was. It is a pity that the editors have chosen a book for bedside, weekend or vacation reading, the editors have chosen to annotate these very letters.

The gift of anonymity

By Stanley Weintraub

DESMOND STEWART:

T. E. Lawrence
352pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.50

H. MONTGOMERY HYDE:

Solitary in the Ranks
Lawrence of Arabia as Airman and Private Soldier
288pp. Constable. £6.95.

"He is an exceptional airman in every respect", read the RAF discharge form of Aircrewman T. E. Shaw when, after twelve years, he left the service in February 1935. What was so exceptional was that the retiring forty-six-year-old soldier, who left the base at Bridlington in unfamiliar-looking baggy civilian tweeds, and on an ordinary bicycle, was "Lawrence of Arabia".

A colonel and international celebrity at twenty-nine, Lawrence rejected the glory — or almost all of it — for the monasticism of the ranks, a renunciation which has intrigued writers (and readers) even more than has his wartime saga as archaeologist-turned-guerrilla leader. Bernard Shaw, who was a friend, wrote in 1922, had wanted more for him than that. Marlborough was given a Blenheim, and Wellington a Stratford, but all Lawrence wanted — and would accept — was the lowest enlisted rank in the RAF; and when he had completed his tour of duty and its extensions, he called it, sincerely, the greatest gift he had ever received. The paradox continues to defy explanation.

Desmond Stewart, a Middle East scholar with a dozen books about the area and its heroes to his credit, examines Lawrence's entire career. "Many surprising discoveries await the reader", the publisher proclaims on the jacket:

The truth behind myths of which Lawrence was the source is finally uncovered. Lawrence did not capture Damascus; he was not the martyr of the Versailles Peace Conference. Stewart... shows us where the man's genius really lay; makes his hypochondria believable and explains the dedication to *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* giving us a deeper insight into that extraordinary work of the imagination....

To quote thus at length is necessary because hardly any of that promise is fulfilled. Certain straw man, it is true, are knocked down. Stewart's T. E. Lawrence, and it would be difficult to find anyone who believes that Lawrence liberated Damascus (although he entered it on the first day of its occupation) or that he was martyred at Versailles. Lawrence himself affirmed that Arab aspirations had been sold out by Anglo-French wartime duplicity long before. A real surprise from the Versailles period is Stewart's confident location of the germ of the dedicatory poem ("S.A.") in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in the death of Lawrence's father, Sir Robert Chapman. The reason — because "the death of a father is usually a crucial event in a man's personality" — lacks credibility, and after Stewart wisely ignores it, himself in discussing the poem.

Confidence is not inspired, either, by the jacket of the *Arabic* edition, where "Paul" Russell (whose *The Great War and Modern Memory* includes nine words on

Lawrence, all in a quotation) declares that there is no reason to doubt that Stewart's book "will become the definitive life". Not so. The case for Lawrence as compulsive fantasist has often been made, not least by Lawrence himself. In the first chapter of *Seven Pillars*, excited from the subscription edition of 1926 but since restored, he wrote of the subjectivity of his book "My proper share was a minor one, but because of fluent pen, a free speech, and a certain adroitness of brain, I took upon myself, as I describe it, a mock primacy". Neither hoax nor history, the imaginative recreation of the events in which he lived proves, depending upon the critic, everything from charity to total recall. Since the truth is somewhere in between, we have not heard the end of this approach.

The case for Lawrence as masochist, made again by Stewart, has been established many times before, most recently by the psychiatrist John E. Mack; nothing more substantial than inference based upon innuendo is utilized, as often before, to claim homosexual proclivities on Lawrence's part. The system is familiar: one develops a case for a man's homosexuality by a series of "proven" facts to prove something further.

Several "finds" — that Lawrence's flagellation episodes began before his enlistment in the ranks, that these were confessed to a member of the Cabinet, and that the potential scandal of a war hero's self-flagellation forced the Government to hide Lawrence in the ranks — have made newspaper headlines in London. The first revelation is credited to an anonymous scholar with access to the closed Bodleian archives who turned up (The Sunday Times, June 26, 1977) to be Colin Simpson, co-author of *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia*. That the documentation can no longer be located by either Simpson or Stewart is not evidence that it did not exist; still, the record of revelations suggests cause for caution, for the second seems sheer guesswork and the third not only without foundation but controverted by every known scrap of hard evidence.

A crucial problem, one faced by every biographer who begins with-out a bias, is the evaluation of the raw materials of a life, from hearsay to holography. Is a letter factual because the writer wrote it? Is something untrue because the teller said so? Or is the truth in the telling? These questions, and more, may be raised by Stewart's use of his "evidence". A wartime letter from Lawrence to his father is assumed, because of its date, place, and content, to be correct; that he was in one place rather than another, and thus could not have been in the vicinity of Deraa in 1917 to undergo his much-written-about capture and homosexual rape. Does one always write the truth to one's spouse? Does one always write the truth to one's parents, especially about occurrences one would rather conceal? Do blanks in relevant "records" mean that nothing happened? Should Lawrence's veracity be questioned when one wants to doubt his word, but he accepted it when it fits one's hypothesis? Should Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen's published diary extracts — published by himself twenty-four years after Lawrence's death — be accepted as accurate, giving his veracious hatred of Lawrence? Or should one believe what is useful.)

Stewart's verifiable contributions to the endless biography of Lawrence remain small and useful. Among them is the identification of the fictitious and punitive uncle whom Lawrence invented as instigator of the floggings which he paid John Bruce to perform eleven times between 1922 and 1934. He is identified from a real relative, Lawrence's "senior kinsman on his father's side", Henry Rupert Featherstonhaugh Frampton... who now sleeps in an unkept grave thrusting thistle and sword, a few yards from Lawrence's grave on which Frampton served in the Tank Corps as Private Shaw, was built, and it

Credibility is weakened by problems such as these. In contrast, Montgomery Hyde's *Solitary in the Ranks* goes to apparently authoritative records to eliminate some of the ambiguities. RAF medical documents, for example (the recruiting office physicians were very much against "passing" Lawrence, one should note), do not suggest that the scars and welts on Lawrence's back, supposedly from the Deraa episode, were fresh wounds; and the discovery that his dozen years in the ranks were an incarceration by the Establishment "to keep the much-publicized but wayward hero under military control" is so ludicrous as to challenge any possible fabrication of Lawrence's own. The overwhelming record, as both Stewart and Hyde detail, is that the military wanted no part of a Private T. E. Lawrence under whatever pseudonym; that Lawrence was ejected, after a few months as Aircrewman, from the RAF; and that he had to battle to remain in the services while officialdom continually tried to lure him, and even force him, out. To suggest that this was all part of a Machiavellian scenario may be worth a quickly forgotten footnote, but it is not worth serious consideration.

Further, all available documentation from every side disposes of Stewart's allegation that Lawrence had a flirtation with Mosleyite fascism, although it was his arranging a meeting with a Mosley supporter — Henry Williamson, an author whose fiction he admired — that cost him his life while returning from posting a telegram. Some of Stewart's hypotheses — even this one — may yet prove accurate, but at present he sounds an uncertain trumpet.

Neither biographer is concerned with Lawrence's parallel career as a writer; Hyde deals with the texture of his service life and Stewart uses *Seven Pillars* and *The Mint* as ornaments of personality and evidence of Lawrence's invention. Stewart, nevertheless, is worth reading for his corrective, if melodramatic, atmosphere of scepticism about almost everything which Lawrence ever said or wrote, even when Stewart's own evidence is hearsay or conjecture. Lawrence was less a compulsive liar, as Richard Aldington claimed in his explosive 1954 "biographical inquiry", than a compulsive myth-maker. His *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is no more a history than is the *Odyssey* he translated while in the ranks. And his letters, like all letters, must be weighed against the motives of the writer and the needs of the recipient.

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was from Frampton that Lawrence purchased for £450 the modestly cottage he called Clouds Hill to which he was returning on his motorcycle when he met his death in May 1935.

Both Hyde and Stewart conclude, inevitably, with the tragic accident that only increased speculation about Lawrence's life, and added to it conjecture about possible foul play that persists to this day. Even there they disagree, as a mystery: black vehicle seen on the road by some witnesses at the time but not by others suggests a murder conspiracy to Stewart but not to Hyde. (Richard Aldington once confided to me that he was sure it was suicide, and that he suspected the reasons, but could not prove it and this could not write about it.) What does remain, despite Hyde's documentation, is a persistent air of mystery about what a cornerer's inquest determined to be an accidental death.

Hyde's method throughout is descriptive rather than analytical, chronicling the years Lawrence spent in the ranks as Aircrewman Ross and Private Shaw, a period in which Stewart, as an Arabist, is less interested except for its relation to Lawrence's pathology. Hyde's chief sources of new documentation are Air Ministry records and the private papers, particularly the correspondence, of Sir Hugh Trenchard, first Chief of Air Staff, with his most notorious and most troublesome enlisted man. Here the publisher is justified in describing the lengthy exchange between a man in the lowest rank of the service and the officer at its head as "unique". The affection and respect each shows for the other radiates through the correspondence, however, trying the relationship was for Trenchard, who at one point had to sack "Aircrewman Ross" and at another had to snatch him from a remote base in the Himalayas which Lawrence enlisted service respectable, and contributed to it in palpable ways which bettered the service. He was then from obscure clerk to stealthy spy. Even at this juncture, Trenchard wrote to Lawrence, "Various people at home have been to see me, rather to implore me not to allow you to re-engage, but to bring you back to England. I have said that when you like to write to me or my successor and say you are tired of the Royal Air Force, I will agree to your going, but I will not take it from any of your friends that you really want to go out. This much I know you will do...."

That Lawrence's life in the ranks was both irksome and rewarding is not news; nor is it news that as private and as aircrewman he managed to live, while in England, a social and literary life which included tea with his Commandant and his wife and weekends with the Chief of Air Staff, Thomas Hardy, Bernard Shaw, assorted peers and peeresses, and members of the House of Commons. (My own wartime observations, as a young officer, of the privileged life in the ranks led by a former schoolmaster who had gone from being a private to private, is evidence to me that Lawrence was not the last of his kind.) What *Solitary in the Ranks* does document is not only that Lawrence was not the last of his kind, but the extraordinary arrangement which left the one-time colonel alone in the ranks with all its concomitant complications and tensions, but how effective the arrangement really was, and how useful it proved for the service which only reluctantly conspired to make itself Lawrence's monastery. Rather than a constant embarrassment, although his presence was a problem at times, the situation became like that of the libertine in the oyster which metamorphoses into a pearl. Lawrence wrote to Trenchard, then retired himself, early in 1935: "It has been very good, and I've given almost as much as I've received, and that's all. I shall feel like a lost dog outside the Himalayas which Lawrence enlisted service respectable, and contributed to it in palpable ways which bettered the service. He was then from obscure clerk to stealthy

Life in Renaissance France

Lucien Febvre



edited and translated by Marian Rothstein
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In arctic circles

By Alfred Stephenson

J. M. SCOTT:

Icebound: Journeys to the Northwest Sea
156pp. Gordon and Breach. £7.95.

Icebound, the story of the search for the Northwest Passage, although containing nothing new, is written with a different approach from previous accounts. The characters of the crews, officers and promoters and their varying motives are described in a rather casual and

often humorous style. The first executive governor of the Hudson Bay Company, for example, is described as "a patently good man, and competent but a confounded nuisance to the Establishment". This was Charles Bayley, a Quaker who was "a man of many talents" who had criticized Charles II for his "chambering and wantonness".

J. M. Scott also includes pertinent personal reminiscences; his style and his assessment of the characters of the personalities involved are the book's different approach from previous accounts. It is handsomely produced and well illustrated with fascinating old prints and modern photographs on a pale sepia paper. There are,

however, some serious mistakes. On the map Fort Providence is located on the Mackenzie River instead of on the northwest arm of Great Slave Lake. The Royal Geographical Society is twice referred to in mistake for the Royal Society. The author says that "Mishimshan Ho" wrote nothing, only painted. This is incorrect: Hood's diaries have recently been published (*The Arctic by Canoe*) and Franklin himself quoted from them extensively. The publishers must also be taken to task for their willy inaccurate statement on the jacket that "the author is one of the few men who have wintered within the Arctic Circle and survived".

Bearing witness

By Patrick McCarthy

RENÉE BÉDARIDA: *Témoignage Chrétien 1941-1944*. 360pp. Paris: Editions Sociales. 57fr.

In *Témoignage Chrétien 1941-1944* Renée Bédarida traces the history of this Catholic Resistance movement, which set out to combat the "neo-paganism" of the Nazis. It was founded by a Jesuit, Père Chaillet, who was an expert on German theology and had seen for himself how the Nazis had harassed the Christians in Tübingen. Chaillet decided that the Church must not compromise with the New Order: *Témoignage Chrétien* would bear witness to Catholic independence.

Chaillet began work at Lyon in 1941. If Vichy was Pétain's capital, then Lyon, which was flooded with refugees and was sheltering the newspapers that had left Germany, was the capital of the Resistance. Chaillet met Henri Frenay, founder of the *Combat* network. Frenay paid for the first number of *Témoignage Chrétien* and the same militants distributed both publications. *Combat* too emphasized moral values: it opposed justice to the Nazi belief in strength. It joined *Témoignage Chrétien* in stressing a moral patriotism, which saw the war not as a nationalist struggle but as a defence of traditional French values like liberty.

The overlap between the two movements is clear in Camus, whose *Combat* articles discuss fraternity and duty in a way reminiscent of Chaillet. In general, *Témoignage Chrétien* belonged to the mainstream of the Resistance. Indeed it was perhaps the most fundamental concept in a Resistance which could not match the Nazis on the battlefield.

At first only 5,000 copies of *Témoignage Chrétien* were printed. Then gradually a network was built up throughout the southern zone; by mid-1943 the movement established itself in Paris and it spread even into the new German territories of Alsace and Lorraine. Naturally there were losses: two of the magazine's printers were arrested and died in concentration camps, while the *Combat* network was infiltrated by the Nazis. As it grew, *Témoignage Chrétien* developed services which helped Jews and other refugees and printed identity cards and ration books.

Yet *Témoignage Chrétien* mutilated its special Catholic mission. Influenced by the pre-war Catholic Action Française, French Catholics were sorely tempted by Vichy. Mme Bédarida points out that Pétain's call for a moral revival appealed to Catholics and that Cardinal Baudrillard applauded collaboration.

The Great Assize

By G. I. A. D. Draper

BRADLEY F. SMITH: *Reaching Judgment at Nuremberg*. 340pp. André Deutsch. 65.50.

The main interest of this work, considered as a possible contribution to the sum of our knowledge of the "Great Assize", derives from the author's access to the unpublished papers and diaries of Francis Biddle, case officer in the library of Syracuse University. The book is a well-told story of the trial, not a legal analysis. It is a valuable addition to the history of the trial, not a legal analysis. It is a well-told story of the trial, not a legal analysis. It is a valuable addition to the history of the trial, not a legal analysis.

As the hierarchy closed ranks behind Vichy and as the Vatican lost itself in the labyrinth of diplomacy, Chaillet spoke out. He knew that Catholics were prone to anti-Semitism and that Xavier Vallat, a leader in the campaign against Jews, was a Catholic. So TC printed 20,000 of its *Antisémites*, which demonstrated that any attack on Jews was an attack on humanity and hence on Catholics. Nor was Chaillet lured into the trap of anti-communism. While the Nazis exploited the Catholic dislike of Marxism in order to rally support to the war in Russia, TC insisted that the prime enemy was the pagan swastika. Sometimes the militants of *Témoignage Chrétien* even sold *L'Humanité*, and vice versa.

Although Chaillet did not want the movement to become political, it inevitably did so. From the outset it attracted the small, pre-war Catholic left. Both its arrested printers had been in the *Renouveau*, while the magazine was distributed at the Renault car works of Billancourt by members of the CPIC, the Catholic trade union. When André Mandouze, formerly active among Catholic students, took over the newspaper, *Courrier français du Témoignage Chrétien*, he gradually introduced a political line. The struggle against fascism was driving the movement closer to the working class.

It kept denouncing anti-communism because it distrusted the selfish motives of bourgeois Catholics. "The Church is not the ally of the bourgeoisie... nor of Capitalism," proclaimed Mandouze. The old elites had fallen France and TC's moral patriotism led it to demand social reform. At the Liberation it called, like *Combat*, for a second French revolution. The animosity between Catholics and anti-clericals was put aside and the Catholic left was greatly strengthened. The militants to whom TC says, impertinently, to "be the most honest of the bourgeoisie" were not the ally of the bourgeoisie.

Mme Bédarida tells her story with loving care. A student at Lyon TC, she lived the movement which she is now recreating. Her personal research book also has a topical interest. The break with conservatism has led to a flowering of left-wing Catholic movements and today there are many Catholic militants in the Socialist Party. Indeed "auto-gestion" has become something of a Catholic cause. Recently the French bishops have been reluctant to hear the warnings against Marxism, but they have not forbidden Catholics to vote for or support the left. Perhaps they remember those unfortunate pastoral letters denouncing *Témoignage Chrétien*.

Undoubtedly working in intelligence must have been the most agreeable way to spend the disagreeable years of Hitler's war. "What could be more enthralling," Ewen Montagu rhetorically asks, "than to read both what our rulers were thinking and planning and what they were actually doing?" Actually, one thing could be more enthralling, and that was not merely to see all this intelligence but to exploit it operationally, as Mr. Montagu did.

He graduated early in the war from the Royal Naval College, intelligence to handling the highest-

edited text of the diaries themselves. Without it, it is not possible to make good the claim, made on the cover of the book, that the author "is able to show how the judges worked, how the feelings, experience and background of each man (judge) contributed to his decisions." In any event, Francis Biddle was only one of eight judges, and naturally the diaries are primarily concerned with his own view and reaction.

The jurist will find little in the book that is of use to legal thinking or an addition to legal knowledge, but the contemporary historian may find better in his own sphere of interest. We are told, for instance, that initially Biddle recommended to his fellow judges that Speer be sentenced to death. "Overnight Biddle apparently softened and on the following morning advanced a compromise. Apparently... the Western judges agreed on the morning of September 11 to sentence Albert Speer to twenty years in prison." It has not been valuable to the author's case, but it is a glimpse into the mind of the jurist.

Subverting the Catalans

By Henry Ettinghausen

EDWARD C. HANSEN: *Rural Catalonia under the Franco Regime*. The Fate of Regional Culture since the Spanish Civil War. 182pp. Cambridge University Press. 18.

Rural Catalonia under the Franco Regime is a social anthropological study of the Alt Penedès, a region that begins some five miles inland from Sitges and is renowned as the fount of Spanish champagne. In an appendix on field procedure the author explains how he gained 30th in the course of surveying the locals in their local. Edward C. Hansen has combined personal contact and acute observation to relate the facts of power to the lives of people and their culture. In particular, he focuses on the breakdown of traditional Catalan values and institutions before the forces of modernization.

Professor Hansen identifies the central government's control of the credit required to increase productivity as more insidious, but no less effective, weapon than political repression. He examines in detail how the government's modernization schemes have undermined the proverbial initiative and self-reliance of the leading wine-growers, led to the loss of their appearance and proletarianization of the small tenant sharecropper, and helped subvert the ancient Catalan inheritance system whereby the heir, or eldest son, succeeded to the family property but helped his brothers obtain apprenticeships, set up in business or the professions.

On the deceiving end

By C. M. Woodhouse

EWEN MONTAGU: *Beyond Top Secret*. 192pp. Peter Davies. 13.90.

Undoubtedly working in intelligence must have been the most agreeable way to spend the disagreeable years of Hitler's war. "What could be more enthralling," Ewen Montagu rhetorically asks, "than to read both what our rulers were thinking and planning and what they were actually doing?" Actually, one thing could be more enthralling, and that was not merely to see all this intelligence but to exploit it operationally, as Mr. Montagu did.

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German intelligence, on the other hand, although by no means operated by fools, lacked a central nervous system. It was controlled by rival groups for political purposes, often directed against each other. Consequently it was never effectively used. No Nazi would have believed that Mr. Montagu played in London.

He was one of the very few men at the centre of the nervous system, with the dual role of supplying intelligence to the armed forces and posing and supplying deception to the enemy. The instruments which he had to play on were virtually foolproof: cipher, broken by the Enigma machine and other devices, Masterman's XX Committee, neutral diplomats (especially Spaniards) who were relied on to look things up, and also some remarkably good desk-officers at the receiving end. There were nevertheless many ways in which the operation could go wrong in unhelpful hands.

In the early days of the war the limited to naval matters, since the Navy was Mr. Montagu's service. Among the subjects on which he passed false information were the installation of torpedo tubes on battleships, the location of gaps in our minefields, the range of radar, the rate of ship-building, the

signs. The decline under Franco of the social institutions of rural Catalonia—with its hereditary family "combinates" and characteristic landlord-tenant relationships—is measured by the author against the sipping of regional collective identity. This he sees optimistically in the eclipse of the local associations that formerly flourished in the region's main town, Vilafraanca. Once the dynamic centres of political, social and cultural life, these associations shared until 1939 the aspirations of Catalan nationalism. In the Franco era, however, they were overshadowed by what Professor Hansen regards as their antithesis, the "bar culture" that substitutes the exaltation of individual success for the traditional Catalan social consciousness. In his view, the distinctive features of the Catalan rural society succumbed to the political and economic dictates of the central government, itself subjected increasingly to "a dependence on the outside world, within Western Capitalist bloc." The era of "Vilafraanca" in a footnote must be Freudian.

The research for this book was completed eight years ago, and it would have been published long since in Spain had this not been prevented by the Ministry of Information. The resultant delay has had the unfortunate effect of obsolescing the precise date to which the present tense pertains. But one important respect it is a pity publication was not delayed a little longer, for developments during the past years have seen to have discredited the book's main conclusion. Undersight now makes Professor Hansen's report of the demise of Catalan nationalism seem decidedly premature. Indeed, Hansen's dilatory death released long repressed popular aspirations

scale and composition of our society, the state of anti-social devices, and so on. By the end of the war he had engaged in reorganizing apparatus built up after the war and abandoned the technique of himself. The Admiralty was so convinced of the results of his work that he was asked to provide information for the formation of a new navy in the United States.

Success led to wider commitments. Mr. Montagu began forming the German army and the operations which they have detected in preparation. Usually he mis-directed them, words Norway, which happened in reality. When the invasion of northern France was imminent, the Germans were misled that it was aimed at the Pas de Calais instead of Normandy. The V-bombs were falling, London was being bombed, and Mr. Montagu persuaded the Germans that most of them were overshooting London, this caused them to alter the range and short. The ingenuity of methods is explained in detail, becoming modesty, brevity and

Naturally the whole operation raised immense problems, proved soluble in the areas of unique and credibility, though the moral problems were harder. Would it be right to deceive the Germans that they were U-boat commanders and traitors? Mr. Montagu decided it would not. It was right to tell the V-bombs to kill one group of people rather than another? Mr. Montagu decided that it was because the actual victims, like in less populated areas, would be fewer than would have been in Central London. Was it right to identify a particular individual as a German spy? Mr. Montagu decided that one naming himself.

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throughout Spain of which Catalonia has proved to be a most potent.

The author's failure to mention that he is taking place in national history, but it appears to be a pity that his implicit assumptions that Catalan nationalism is a traditionalist social institution are not restated against the evidence that its apparent decline was not irreversible. In this connection, it is significant that he does not have inquired of his informants among the bourgeoisie whether and in what ways they resented their economic dependence on Madrid.

A fundamental aspect of the life that he fails to examine is the role of the Catalan local identity and solidarity as a reminder to non-Catalans of the hostility (such as government officials) that they do not belong to the Catalan society. The reader is not made clear of the author's informants are habitual "public" language because they assumed that American anthropologist would be proficient in Catalan.

However, the book has only one unpardonable fault: neither its title nor its subtitle conveys the fact that this is a study of one of the thirty-eight communities that make up Catalonia, and the author does not seem to be aware of the dangers of generalizing about the whole from such small and peculiar part. With this caveat, however, the book must be commended as a valuable and readable insight into the life of Catalonia, going on behind the tourist's facade of Sitges at a critical moment of Catalan history.

scale and composition of our society, the state of anti-social devices, and so on. By the end of the war he had engaged in reorganizing apparatus built up after the war and abandoned the technique of himself. The Admiralty was so convinced of the results of his work that he was asked to provide information for the formation of a new navy in the United States.

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A choice of two Chaucers

By Victoria Rothschild

ALFRED DAVID: *The Strumpet Muse: Art and Morals in Chaucer's Poetry*. 288pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (International Book Distributors) £9.35.

JOHN GARDNER: *The Poetry of Chaucer*. 408pp. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. (Transatlantic Book Service) \$15.

The Life and Times of Chaucer. 328pp. Cape. £7.50.

There are, it seems, two great collections of poetry existing in English both, mysteriously, known as the works of Geoffrey Chaucer. There is the Gothic structure of allusion, analogue and doctrine, whose author must be understood through carefully reconstructing the whole picture that he reflected. And there is the elusive body of fiction, product of a shifting artistic persona, from which the author remains persistently absent, evading all personal commitment in the interests of narrative art. Roughly speaking, the first is the Chaucer of the medievalist, the second that of the modern critic.

This duality is understandable, for Chaucer is in many respects a difficult writer, and the highly polished surface of his poetry overlays and conceals a more complex, and characteristically medieval, depths. It is difficult to reconcile the author of the early, conventional courtly poems with the dispassionate narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*, or to ascertain of either when he speaks ironically and when seriously, when with his own voice and when with the voice of another, to discover at what point we share the joke and at what point we are the object of it. But this hardly justifies the extremes of method and outlook to which Chaucerian scholarship has been subjected.

Pursued for its own sake and not as a means to an end, the historical method leads to a Chaucer hopped together out of references and detail, whose art lies buried under the mass of scholarly allusion that he has so carefully constructed. And the modern emphasis on the fictional persona, while it provides a useful language with which to describe Chaucer's semi-dramatic method, sets up another kind of barrier between Chaucer and the modern reader. It is a necessary result of such a focus on Chaucer's method, his reliance on a poetic facade, that attention will be drawn away from the subject: for to concentrate on this one aspect of his art, in a literal sense, is to miss the point, for the subject is not Chaucer to be understood, but the medieval world which he widens the mind and the post-Renaissance mind are unquestionably held up as excuses for critical evasion; and too often, when faced with Chaucer, critics forget both their sensitivity and their common sense, retreating towards one or other of these poles.

Both Alfred David and John Gardner are aware of the difficulties of their subject and of the dangers of polarizing Chaucerian scholarship, and both confront this problem. They both attempt to present an accurate introduction to the works for students—they approach the point of reconciliation between "medieval" and "modern" from the two opposite points of view. Professor David, aiming at the critical direction, and Professor Gardner at comprehensive scholarly exposition.

Professor David finds in Chaucer's works a recurrent note of self-consciousness. He argues in *The Strumpet Muse* that Chaucer's development as a poet illustrates the struggle between the moralist who calls for judgment and the artist who refuses to judge. His early poems, though they contain the seeds of his subsequent liberalism, are nevertheless largely governed by the requirements of the medieval court audience; they are seen as stylized and derivative, and their purpose is to please. The Chaucer of the *Canterbury Tales* is a more complex figure. He is a more complex figure. He is a more complex figure. He is a more complex figure.

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between Chaucer and his listeners. As Chaucer's artistic sense started to supersede the conventional and moral vision, a conflict arose between his two roles—as medieval moralist and modern poet—which was to remain unresolved. For although in the end, David writes, the artist triumphed over the moralist, this very triumph caused Chaucer to denounce his art, appending to the *Canterbury Tales* the notorious Retractions, in which he drops his poetic mask and appears as the exemplary medieval man.

It is a pity that Professor David spills an otherwise valuable discussion of Chaucer's growing self-awareness as an artist by basing his thesis on an unexamined distinction (and supposed conflict) between the artist and the moralist. For example, he claims that *Troilus and Criseyde* is not the poem that Chaucer intended it to be, that while his morality required that he uphold Troilus's ideal of fidelity, his artistic gifts led him to the more human faithlessness of Criseyde. Chaucer, he writes, "was of Criseyde's party without knowing it."

This thesis ought to require a detailed criticism to establish it. But David gives very little real criticism; he derives his conclusion from certain dominant abstractions. He suggests that poetry can be seen in terms of what is concrete and transient, so that Chaucer, who as a poet works through imagery, can represent the concrete reality of Criseyde's fickle passion, but not the abstract ideal which Troilus upholds. He then concludes that the love which Chaucer most vividly describes is also the love which his poetry implicitly, and in spite of himself, upholds. But surely Chaucer does not follow this line of thought only through imagery? Is vivid representation always a kind of endorsement? Students of Milton and Dante will see here no abstract truth, but serious and disquieting problems. Why should a student of Chaucer not see those problems too?

It is also surprising that Professor David is able to draw his conclusion and still adhere so confidently to the distinction between artist and moralist. If there were such a distinction, the student of Chaucer could not deny its author's moral stance through its qualities as art. It is surely precisely when one approaches literature with the aims of the modern critic (for whom the reader's response tends to take precedence over philosophical abstractions) that these distinctions between aesthetic and moral, artist and preacher, ought to seem less rewarding. If a writer is reluctant to moralize—if, like Chaucer, he prefers dramatic to didactic expression—

then it does not follow that there is no moral stance implicit in his work or that the reader is not being invited to share in it. It is a mark of the artist, not that he makes no judgments, but that he engages our attention so completely that we can make the judgments for ourselves. And Chaucer was such an artist, not only at the beginning of his career, but also at the end. Professor David's schematic approach obscures that truth, and leads him to a dubious interpretation both of Chaucer's poetic sensibility and of his moral sense.

But there are also blatant inaccuracies. For example, we are told that Chaucer, in *The Parliament of Fowles*, line 316, mentions the "antichristians" of Alain de Lille, whereas in fact the line does not mention him at all. It is a minor slip, but to the Chaucerian it will probably give rise to a certain distrust. For the *De Planctu Naturae* was one of the most important expositions of literary neo-Platonism in the medieval period, and was a profound influence on the art and poetry of France and England. Chaucer's naming of Alain provides a direct clue to his own thought in *The Parliament of Fowles*. Gardner's careless remarks reveal a somewhat casual attitude to the subject; they also ensure that the reader cannot rely on the reliable introduction for students that it purports to be.

Unlike Professor David, Professor Gardner does not have a dominant thesis, unless it is the simple but true contention that Chaucer is a poet whose work is as relevant to the interests of the modern reader as the work of any other poet. He does feel that he can cast light on that contention by a new scholarly method: that Chaucer's narrative method is an expression of the nominalism that had been expounded by William of Ockham and which was taught in Oxford in Chaucer's day. (In *The Life and Times of Chaucer* he speculates inconclusively as to whether Chaucer actually attended Oxford to present an accurate introduction to a reading of Chaucer's poetry. A master of the throwaway line and the understatement, Gardner remarks, for example, that a "Canterbury Tale" is in Middle English slang, "a lie," and that Mercury is identified in alchemy with both the "philosopher's child" and the Devil.) And, in the absence of any references at all, the reader has to take these provocative suggestions on trust. If a *Canterbury Tale* was a lie (and the OED at least thinks otherwise), this must seriously affect our reading of the whole work in a profound way; but evidence, no conclusion can be reached. And if, in total contrast to what is shown in all the usual mythological and iconographic sources, such as Boccaccio's *Gene-*

alogy *Deorum* and Macrobius's *Saturniaria*—or, indeed, in the alchemical sources where he was naturally somewhat more epigrammatic—Mercury was regularly used as a symbol of the devil rather than of wisdom, eloquence and harmony, then not only would a reinterpretation of many key passages be required, but also a revision of the standard assumptions about the medieval's attitude to their pagan inheritance.

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Like *The Poetry of Chaucer*, *The Life and Times of Chaucer* is almost entirely "secondary" material. As Gardner confesses, "I have gathered the available scholarly materials in a heap. This book is too short to do justice to the material; we are told that Chaucer followed Langland's de-

velopment with distance, that our word 'trivial' is derived from the trivialium subjects studied in the medieval schools, that 'what came before Chaucer, in France especially... was wine-sipper's poetry' and so on. But where is the evidence that Chaucer read Langland, or that he did so with 'disdain'? Where is the evidence that Skeat's and the OED's etymology for 'trivial' is mistaken? And how can one reconcile Gardner's views on medieval French literature with Dante's extravagant admiration for Arnaut Daniel, or with the considered judgment of those well-known carousers, Eliot and Pound?

Nevertheless, *The Life and Times of Chaucer* remains a more valuable book for the student of Chaucer than it surveys historical and social facts which may very well be unfamiliar to him. It is vital to a proper understanding of Chaucer that the contrast between the self-conscious chivalry countenanced by Richard II and the ugly realities of life at the time of the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt should be fully depicted, and one must be grateful for Professor Gardner's attempt to do this. It offers a well-constructed, detailed and readable history of the period.

One cannot but be dismayed that the story of a time of remorseless platitude with which the concepts and experiences of medieval man are conveyed. "It hardly needs saying," Gardner says, "that the world into which Geoffrey Chaucer was born was not like ours... it was a world of horrors and of such bloodcurdling horrors as... thereby introducing—admittedly in good medieval rhetorical fashion—a lame and lengthy catalogue of the things of which 'one need not talk' (horrors ranging from judicial torture to the appalling habit of eating with one's fingers). Such facts are interspersed with the occasional wordy generosity, for example that 'childhood in some respects is always the same, in other respects different from age to age.' The manner is that of the reassuring commonplace, the comforting representation of all human things as in one way very, very wonderful, but in another way wholly familiar. Chaucer's deathbed scene, as one might imagine, particularly lends itself to this kind of treatment: just in time he manages to call for his quill and ink and dashes off the Retractions, 'Then in panic he realised, but only for an instant, that he was dead, falling violently toward Christ'.

Professor Gardner seems unable to decide whether he is writing an imaginative portrait or a scholarly report. The book switches abruptly from a lengthy rehearsal of scholarly arguments (such as those concerning the parentage of Chaucer's first son, with notes and queries from learned journals, to seasonal raspberries, or those unknown parts of his life which no medieval record could possibly have preserved. Professor Gardner lacks the courage to leave his scholarship behind, and yet, hampered always by the weight of his ideas, to present a simple, non-seguitur is all that he offers by way of argument both for the theory of nominalism and its presumed influence on Chaucer, as well as for the further striking claim that nominalism was a form of thoroughgoing scepticism.

The thesis that the true object of knowledge is a particular and not a universal is held to imply that there is nothing we can really know. And if, as for this reason, Chaucer, in the *Canterbury Tales*, presents us with nothing more than an array of individuals, divorced from any universal moral meaning, the implication is that any writer who writes from explicit moralizing and concentrates instead on the representation of individual life, whose method is dramatic rather than didactic, is a covert nominalist, and also a covert sceptic who believes, along with Professor Gardner, that the only way we can really know" is by a direct, unmediated contact with the world. Such a claim does nothing more than provide a dubious historical authority for the old "persona" problem without in any way illuminating either the poetry or the life and times of the poet.

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The strains of war

By S. B. Saul

GERD HARDACH:
The First World War 1914-1918
328pp. Allen Lane. £7.

DEREK H. ALDROFT:
From Versailles to Wall Street 1919-1929
372pp. Allen Lane. £7.

Strangely enough, economic historians have not shown a great deal of interest in the First World War. They have worried long enough about the world depression of the 1930s, though their concern has not made its causes any more certain, and one reason for this could be their failure to get to grips with those features of the war that helped to make the greatest of economic crises inevitable. The consequence is that, though Gerd Hardach's book may have been more difficult to find, it is a much more difficult literature to bring together than did Derek Aldcroft, who had a much better opportunity to say something arresting and original. Aldcroft confines himself almost entirely to works in English and has produced a book that is competent, conventional and unexciting. Hardach has used a wider range of sources to produce a more controversial book, in parts much better and in parts much worse than Aldcroft's. It is, too, a fairly pronounced logical bias and is sprinkled with the collapses of liberal capitalism, rapacious landlords and the like; you can take or leave these as you wish, though now and then they lead Hardach into serious analytical errors.

The key to success in the economic war was the ability to mobilize resources to the highest possible degree. Nineteenth-century wars had not been like that; then the aim had been to mobilize more quickly and effectively than the enemy without seriously disrupting the internal economy by so doing. Only gradually after 1914 did it realize that war had become a matter of the comparative use of total resources. Even though the Russo-Japanese campaign in Manchuria seemed to anticipate a war of attrition, to both sides in 1914 the consequences of adopting such an attitude for the comparative use of total resources were too frightening even to contemplate. As in the Second World War, Germany began with the idea of an economic and military blitzkrieg, and both sides took a long time to do anything approaching a full mobilization.

tion of labour and capital, not because they were incompetent but because they lacked the vision. Contrary to the impression sometimes given, it was the striking superiority in material of the British at the Somme offensive in 1916 that forced Germany to step back on its own commitment and for the leap-frogging process to get under way with a vengeance.

The all-out economic blockade of the Central Powers was as much contrary to international law as the German practice of sinking merchant ships without warning. But just as the submarine campaign had only a minor effect on total Allied resources, so Hardach suggests that little can be said for the argument that the economic blockade was the winning weapon that left the German army in a "suburban field". True, Germany faced shortages of some vital supplies but she effectively developed new manufacturing techniques and produced substitute materials for many of them. The Central Powers had only themselves to blame if they did not use the resources available to them as effectively as they might have done; Hungary for example was determined to give minimal help over food to Austria. The fall of imperial Russia, and the consequent exports to war production and the many was strikingly successful in persuading the non-belligerent nations to finance her import surpluses for her. Certainly it was the surplus that was the key to success in the war, but it was the significant contribution to the German war effort, but one would be more convinced by all this if Hardach were more specific about the shortages of strategic materials that were not overcome and also about the loss to the German economy of foregoing the benefits of international specialization.

But in an economic battle of this nature Germany was surely doomed. Britain came out better with regard to food and other supplies simply because its economy was better able to bear the strains of war than was what counted, not foreign aid alone. In addition, despite bled George's cheap fibes at the measure of the American contribution, the United States received from Germany, equivalent to fifty months' projected output by Germany under the Hindenburg Programme. It was not surprising then that, forced to fight an economic war of attrition, Germany was the loser. The war found it extremely difficult to do this efficiently. They financed it by borrowing because they had always financed short wars in this way and in any case did not have the administrative apparatus for anything else. In Germany, for ex-

ample, income tax could only be imposed by the states and, in this of inflation, turnover and profits taxes could all too easily be passed on to the consumer and so intensify the unfortunate effects of the war on income distribution. Price controls held inflation in Germany down to only about 100 per cent over the war years, whereas in France and in neutral Sweden it was twice as high; but internally the controls were often contradictory and led to misuse of resources, and this artificial suppression of inflation certainly stored up awful problems for the future.

At this macro level Hardach puts over the argument and the detail very well; it is at the micro level that he is far less impressive and that ideology begins to get badly in the way. He tries to assess war production in terms of company figures of total profits but makes not the slightest attempt to relate these absolute amounts either to turnover or to capital employed. He is unwilling to look objectively at the evidence that suggests there was a rise in the standard of living in Britain at least towards the end of the war. Nor does he spend any time at all on one of the main factors behind this trend—the very significant increases in productivity that were achieved in some sectors of industry. His section on the consequences of the war is distinctly inferior to that of Aldcroft. One cannot, for example, accept his argument that the Peace Settlement did not cause the German economic slump without a very much more precise indication of his reasons for believing that the eastern territories seriously hindered that growth before 1914.

Pits and pendulums

By Sidney Pollard

M. W. KIRBY:
The British Coalmining Industry, 1870-1946
A Political and Economic History
278pp. Macmillan. £10 (paperback, £3.95).

ISRAEL BERNKOVITCH:
Coal on the Switchback
The Coal Industry since Nationalisation
237pp. Allen and Unwin. £7 (paperback, £3.50).

These two books devoted mostly to the form a continuing history of the coalmining industry over the past hundred years. The style and approach of the two authors are however widely different.

M. W. Kirby has produced a scholarly historical work, using all the available sources, concentrating on the political and economic structure as a whole in focus while dealing with details. Although he concentrates on the politics of coal, he has allowed himself to be distracted by judicious questions over which as one time feeling ran very high. The owners, especially, are shown to have been headed and ruthlessly inflexible, and no effluxion of time is ever likely to alter that impression, but no one emerges with much credit out of the major conflicts ravaging the coalfields in the inter-war years and especially out of the General Strike, least of all the TUC General Council and the Baldwin Government. The problem was that the industry, without lowering wages or reducing production, was faced with a massive reduction in employment, was like trying to square the circle, and Kirby's political reasons; and one regular after another was wrecked in the attempt.

In this oft-ploughed furrow it is difficult to be original, but some of the most interesting things which the author has to say concern the conflict between wages and employment. The miners' leaders, he argues, were again and again willing to accept lower wages in order to keep up wages in the industry as a whole; but this conflict, some many other industries in the coal, was a very real one, and it was, on the whole, this is a very useful summary of the evidence in

If one of the great merits of Hardach's book is the insight it gives into the economic and political difficulties that emerged out of the 1920s were on, despite the apparent economic prosperity of the late 1920s, the decade was no political confidence. It was only ended one aspect of the Franco-German struggle and it was some important figures—Monsieur Clemenceau, for example, who had no doubt the ground of physical distress, as being essential for the time of recovery investment. But, as the British, who had no claim to the ground of physical distress, insisted on holding the line, since Germany would never pay full claim the result was a reduction of payment away to France.

There is no longer the ally doubt that Germany's debt allowed inflation to run out as to subvert the reparations. The London Conference, the Dawes Loan and the Young Plan, all favoured Germany over France, partly because of the prejudice against the French and partly because of the lack of confidence in the French. The book, which examines one phenomenon, spirit-possession, among a wide range of peoples, is therefore very welcome; it adds substantially to our knowledge of specific examples of spirit-possession, and also gives a basis for comparison and theoretical construction.

But if Aldcroft's own synthesis of the causes of the depression is unremarkable and sounds very familiar, one cannot criticize him for not achieving it. Since historians and economists generally appear to do no nearer to a full understanding of it, Peter Tomlin recently told us effectively enough what did not cause the American slump but was woefully weak when it came to saying what might have caused it. More work has been given weight again to the under-consumptionist case—Hardach will

present available, a splendid introduction to a complex subject. The post-nationalization period is treated by Israel Bernkovitch in very different style. An analysis of coal status is created by a foreword, by Sir Derek Rice, by an almost exclusive concentration on official sources and a tendency to devote too much of space to formal trivia. Yet occasionally the most formal blandness is found next to the most eccentric judgement, as in the case of the importance of the general air of disorganization and lack of control over the material is maligned further by a somewhat breathless and journalistic style of writing.

The author, however, is more interested in science and technology than in the byzantine politics of coal and, taking some of the issues settled in Dr Kirby's period for granted, concentrates in the later chapters on the energy question as a whole. Although the book suddenly comes to life and in a way that clearly represents a deeply held conviction, the sorry tale of the ultimately costly neglect of coal

Country days

By Pamela Horn

J. H. BETTEY:
Rural Life in Wessex, 1500-1900
151pp. Moonraker Press. £4.95.

In *Rural Life in Wessex 1500-1900* J. H. Betty has produced a brief account of economic and social changes within his chosen area. His descriptions of regional variations in agriculture and the way these developed over the centuries are useful. He is particularly interesting on the farming innovations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unfortunately, however, the reader gets no clear picture of what life was like for those who worked on the land. The physical effort required of many of them in carrying out their daily duties is hardly mentioned. The greater use of reminiscences and parliamentary papers might have helped to overcome this weakness, at least for the nineteenth century.

Much the same criticism may be applied to the chapters on rural industries; though the problems are somewhat different, the author

like that—and Sir Arthur is still pressed on with the idea that it was part of one of his great long swings of economic theory. But let us leave him to his own devices.

The practice of ecstasy

By Caroline Humphrey

JOHN T. HUTCHCOCK and REX L. JONES (Editors):
Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalayas
401pp. Warminster: Aris and Phillips. £10.

There can be few countries which are more varied sociologically than Nepal. It is a mosaic of ethnic groups, including peasant rice-farmers, sophisticated urban artisans and craftsmen, mountain pastoralists, long-distance traders, and even a few remaining hunters and gatherers. Some of these groups are highly stratified internally on caste principles, others have a more tribal or kin-based social organization—most are a complex mixture of the two. Religious life is similarly complicated, since each group is able to determine its own characteristic orientation by giving greater or lesser weight to the patronage of religious specialists of various kinds: Hindu priests, temple oracles, Buddhist lamas both within and outside monasteries, numerous shamans, diviners, sorcerers and healers. This book, which examines one phenomenon, spirit-possession, among a wide range of peoples, is therefore very welcome; it adds substantially to our knowledge of specific examples of spirit-possession, and also gives a basis for comparison and theoretical construction.

He proposes instead a four-fold classification, based on the dimensions of time and space in the occurrence of possession. Lewis's "portable possession" is retained in one category (the case when someone is possessed involuntarily at any time and in any place), the other three are: "reincarnate possession" (for example the reincarnate Buddhist of the Sherpas and Thibetans, who are "possessed" for life but tied to particular monasteries or temples), "oracular possession" (occurring at designated times of rituals, and specific holy places, as with the *dhams* of Western Nepal), and "ritual possession" (when time is designated but space is not, as is the case with the *shukri* found over much of eastern Nepal). Thus, tutelary and oracular possession are designated to time, while peripheral and reincarnate possession are not; and reincarnate and oracular possession are designated with regard to space, while peripheral and tutelary possession are not.

This schema has a certain elegance and encompasses most of the types of "possession" described in this book. Nevertheless we may question whether it is an advance on Lewis. Lewis's theory was essentially sociological: central cults exist to promote social norms, peripheral cults against them, or at least distinct from them. One may agree or disagree with this idea. But it is questionable whether Jones's categories are really of much sociological relevance; anything in the world may be classified by the dimensions of time and space, but is this what we want

sideration of the phenomenon as such.

Some interesting facts emerge: for example, that shamans among the Raji in south-west Nepal are retained in a *jyamsa*-like system in which they are regularly paid by client villages and are duty-bound therefore to come out and perform ceremonies. In other areas shamans may be in competition for clients. It is clear from numerous articles in this book that ecstatic practices of comparable kinds exist not only among the shamans and healers of the native religions but also in strictly Hindu cults (the ecstatic *brachas* at certain temples) and in Buddhism (the *wara*-master of the Mahabala *puga* performed by many Nepali and Tibetan groups).

Rex Jones attempts to pull all this together in his initial paper, "Spirit Possession and Society in Nepal". He acknowledges the pioneering work of T. M. Lewis in the sociology of ecstatic religion, but concludes that Professor Lewis's classification of the phenomenon into central and peripheral cults is inadequate to deal with the complexity of Nepal. In particular, he disagrees with Lewis's claim that central possession functions to uphold public morality in small, fluid communities. He writes, "... the articles presented in this book do not bear this out. We find 'central possession' in such highly stratified societies as India, Nepal, and Tibet, and they are not always associated with public morality, or political reactions to social change."

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classification, based on the dimensions of time and space in the occurrence of possession. Lewis's "portable possession" is retained in one category (the case when someone is possessed involuntarily at any time and in any place), the other three are: "reincarnate possession" (for example the reincarnate Buddhist of the Sherpas and Thibetans, who are "possessed" for life but tied to particular monasteries or temples), "oracular possession" (occurring at designated times of rituals, and specific holy places, as with the *dhams* of Western Nepal), and "ritual possession" (when time is designated but space is not, as is the case with the *shukri* found over much of eastern Nepal). Thus, tutelary and oracular possession are designated to time, while peripheral and reincarnate possession are not; and reincarnate and oracular possession are designated with regard to space, while peripheral and tutelary possession are not.

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to know about them? In any case Jones has difficulty with the notion of "undesigned time", which is supposed to apply to both "portable" and "reincarnate" possession. In fact the ideas of time in the two cases are different: in the former "undesigned time" means sporadically or unpredictably, while in the latter, it means continuous or always present.

The whole area of study is very complex. As John T. Hitchcock points out in his introduction, the title "spirit possession" was only chosen for this book because it covers most of the phenomenon described. The very richness of the materials presented makes even this generalization questionable: among the Gurungs, for example, ritual specialists (*pajus* and *khapras*) with virtually identical social functions to those of the *shukri* shaman, are not possessed at all, but control the supernatural world by other means. Meanwhile, ordinary Gurungs, particularly children, or in any case non-specialists, do become possessed and, according to Alan Macfarlane, enter trances almost automatically when a certain rhythmic music is played; this is not interpreted as being due to supernatural agencies.

The book contains various suggestions as to how such material may be understood. Jones sees virtually all possessions as having the intent of promotion of social advancement, though in different forms it takes in the various ethnic groups being related to the status and institutions available to the disinterested. But although this tells us something about the social function of the possession, it is an avenue for social advancement through spirit possession—it does not go far enough in explaining the different forms of possession, which may present several alternative types even within one group.

A more specific, and in my view more original insight is contained in Walter Winkler's paper on far west-

tern Nepal. He contrasts the western *shukri*, who has a well-defined role at the temple but little control of the trance sequence, with the eastern *shukri*, who has no institutional affiliation but can call on a variety of spirits at will. Winkler suggests that these are two separate processes of possession related to different cosmologies and conscious ideas as to what the specialist is doing in each case. The *dhams* represents a process in which an all-powerful immanent deity chooses to possess an individual, and the *shukri* a process whereby through earthly sources and techniques of control the individual can call on the more distant deities and gain power over them.

This is related to different social contexts. In the Hindu temple, where there is an integrated hierarchy of greater and lesser deities, the *dhams* is one among the ranked specialists, his place, depending on the importance of the deity which possesses him. "In these circumstances," Winkler writes, "the role of possession draws for its dynamism not upon ritual itself but upon the latent power of the hierarchy of deities." But in eastern Nepal groups where neither the spirits nor the *shukri* themselves are strictly ranked in relation to one another, the role of possession will draw upon the source of power offered by specialized techniques and materials.

In other words, possession cannot be given a blanket explanation of the "social advancement" or "oblique protest" type since what it actually does in society is crucially dependent on the social context. Winkler's kind of analysis could be interesting for the Gurungs, too, since it is difficult to see that the social advancement theory could apply there.

This book contains an abundance of excellent descriptive and critical material and deserves to be read widely, not only by specialists on Nepal but also by anthropologists and others interested generally in religion.

Souls apart

By Dilip Hiro

J. P. DESAI:
Untouchability in Rural Gujarat
265pp. Bombay: Popular Prakashan. Rs40.

The Hindu caste system is rooted in the ancient history of India. While some Hindus are excluded from it altogether, and called Outcasts, those within it are classified in order of purity and intellect, the superiority of the Brahmins, the poets, being at the top, and the Sudras, the menials, at the bottom. The social status of the Outcast is considered to be so low as to render him untouchable by those within the caste system. "Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead and they shall eat their food from broken dishes; black iron (articles) shall be their ornaments, and they must wander from place to place, as the *Mazda* *pir*, a Hindu scripture, compiled between 200 BC and 100 BC. "Their transactions (shall be) among themselves and their marriage with their equals, that is, they shall not walk about in villages and in towns; and by day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at the King's command." And the work they have been condemned to do is to sweep streets, dig latrines, handling gutters and latrines, handling dead animals, and tanning.

There have been many changes in India over the centuries but next to none in the social status of, or the functions performed by, the Untouchables. Even in the twentieth century, the Untouchables of India today, it is impossible to meet a street-sweeper or a garbage-collector who is not an Outcast. Happily, however, the impersonal nature of modern city life makes it almost impossible to impose the social disabilities historically associated with "untouchability".

The villages are different, though. Despite much enlightened legislation, stemming from the liberal values enshrined in the country's republican constitution of 1950, which abolished untouchability "forthwith", progress towards the

social liberation of India's 77 million rural Untouchables remains tardy.

This is well borne out by the study of sixty-nine villages in the western state of Gujarat by J. P. Desai. In order to determine the extent of untouchability prevalent in Gujarat today, Professor Desai first broke it down in twenty-four items of behaviour. Half of these pertain to the private sphere of life: access to a caste Hindu temple or home or shop or well, working side by side with a caste Hindu agricultural worker, being served by a barber or potter or tailor, and so on; and the other half to the public sphere—access to public transport or post office, seating arrangements in a school classroom, intervention between Outcast pupils and caste Hindu teacher, etc.

Not surprisingly, he found that the Outcasts face fewer barriers in public transport, schools and other public services than they do in situations of a personal nature. The discrimination they face in the classroom or in a bus is minimal. In contrast, discrimination in the case of entry to a Hindu temple or house is high, as high as 80 or 90 per cent in the case of a barber-shop, since barbers offer a service that involves close body contact between the server and the served.

Unfortunately, Professor Desai did not study such important facets of untouchability as the residential pattern in rural Gujarat. However, a study of 206 villages in the adjoining State of Maharashtra revealed that as much as 90 per cent of the Outcast families lived outside the village boundaries; a pattern that had been set nearly three thousand years ago.

Aside from defining untouchability in specific terms of human behaviour, Professor Desai has done little that can be construed as original. His conclusions are nothing more than the quantification of something that is widely known both in India and abroad. But to reach these conclusions the reader has to wade through 255 pages of tedious, and mind-boggling statistical tables, containing tedious descriptions of the methodology used by the author, with only occasional relief in the form of illustrations of the everyday practices of untouchability in rural Gujarat.

The instruments of humility

By Sanjukta Gupta

WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY:
The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology
411pp. University of California Press. £11.25.

Myths tell how through divine intervention man has become what he is today, a mortal, axed, cultural being, tasting joy and torment. Wendy O'Flaherty's book confronts us with this torment, the physical and moral evils of life. The problem of evil and theodicy has been handled from the Western perspective by scholars from Leibniz to Paul Ricoeur. Does the problem exist in Hinduism? In the Vedic myth of the Crow-demon this powerful and conceived demon lusted after Sita and tried to violate her. Lord Rama, Sita's spouse, was roused in wrath, which harrowed the demon until, defeated and frightened, he took refuge at Sita's feet. An appalling glimpse from compassionate Sita's eyes of evil and theodicy has been handled from the Western perspective by scholars from Leibniz to Paul Ricoeur. Does the problem exist in Hinduism? In the Vedic myth of the Crow-demon this powerful and conceived demon lusted after Sita and tried to violate her. 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Removal expenses and lodging allowance payable in approved cases.

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Applicants should be qualified Librarians with some experience in Bibliographic Training and a knowledge of Modern Micro Methods of recording this information.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW LIBRARIES SERVICES DISTRICT LIBRARIAN

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